# Maintaining a healthy weight in lymphoedema

## Key points

As well as the general benefits of maintaining a healthy weight, being overweight will make your lymphoedema worse and harder to manage. For more information on how to eat healthy and what a balanced diet should include, visit the NHS website or speak to our Lymphoedema team.

- Getting started on a healthy eating plan can often be the hardest part - don't be afraid to ask for help from your GP, practice nurse, lymphoedema specialist, family and friends.
- Try to increase the amount of fruit and vegetables in your diet - they contain vital minerals and vitamins as well as fibre. Aim for variety and at least 5 portions a day.
- Avoid sugary foods and drinks, especially those with more than 22.5g of sugar per 100g.
- Up your intake of fish, two or more portions of any fish per week, plus another of oily fish such as salmon or mackerel.
- Watch portion sizes and try changing to a smaller plate as it makes your portions look bigger!
- Try not to eat too late in the day - give your body a chance to work off those calories.
- Remember, as well as containing calories, alcohol can make you hungry, so approach with caution.
- Adults should aim for no more than a teaspoon of salt a day, including the hidden salt in the food we eat. Make it a habit to look at food labels and avoid those that contain more than 1.5g of salt per 100g.
- If you are someone who finds it a challenge to stick to a healthy eating plan, try using a food diary. As well as writing down what you eat, keep a note of what is happening in your life - you may notice there are patterns to the times when you reach for the biscuits! Knowing this can help you avoid these times and change your habits to make it easier for you to stick to plan.
- Even the little changes can make big differences.

